



UTAH SYSTEM OF
HIGHER EDUCATION

MEMORANDUM

TAB E

August 20, 2021

Program Alignment Update and Discussion

The Utah Board of Higher Education's strategic plan includes a strategy for program coordination and alignment as part of the completion priority. The tactic is to "Facilitate coordination among programs to align program structure to support transfer, wherever possible."

Considerations

Areas that influence this initiative include:

- Technical education programs that are intended to provide students with the broad knowledge and foundational skills that are needed for entry-level employment.
- Of the unique programs offered, about half are regulated in content or outcomes by a third-party accreditor or licensing agency.
- Each approved program has an Occupational Advisory Committee made up of a minimum of three members who are external to the institution with expertise in the program area. Committees meet at least twice annually to review the program and ensure the instruction aligns with industry demand. This guidance remains critical to the development of relevant programs across the state.

Objectives

- When industry hires technical education graduates, they should be able to depend on the consistency and quality of that employee regardless of the institution attended.
- Students who have explored technical education programs throughout Utah should have a reasonable expectation that they will receive the same quality of training regardless of the institution they attend.
- Consistent course offerings will improve efficiency and quality in sharing curriculum, instructional resources, and developing transfer agreements.
- Consistent graduation requirements will assist and result in employers and industry representatives across the state better understanding the opportunities and outcomes of technical education.

Expectations

In their June meeting, the Committee supported the following expectations in the implementation of this initiative:

- The System office will coordinate the effort with program committees made up of at least one faculty member from each institution offering the program.
- The initiative should include the participation of all technical education institutions.
- Graduation requirements must be the same for each program.
- Programs must include a core with foundational courses that are common across all institutions offering the program, represent entry-level employment requirements, and make up 70% of the total program length.
- Program committees may develop a list of elective courses that institutions may choose from in accordance with regional needs.
- Programs will include title, lengths, and objectives.
- Courses will include numbers, titles, length in instructional hours, descriptions, and objectives or competencies.
- The system office will develop a guidance document to assist with the effort.

Timeline

- July 1, 2023 Graduation requirements and core courses implemented
- July 1, 2024 Alignment effort finalized

Reporting

- Initiative updates
- New/modified/discontinued programs

Commissioner’s Recommendation

Information and discussion item only.